Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

put under the Direction of the African Committee in the same Manner as the other Forts are in that Quarter, and it would be extremely proper to have a small Establishment immediately at Portlandie, were it only as a Mark of Possession and Right to that part of the Gum Coast, which, otherwise may one Time, be usurped by the French.

Jefferson's Plan for a Military Colony in Orleans Territory

Jefferson's plans for the settlement and control of the territory acquired from France in 1803 afford an interesting study in the attempt to harmonize abstract theory and actual practice in government. Jefferson as president found it somewhat difficult to carry into effect the theories which he had enunciated in the declaration of independence. His scheme for the establishment of a military colony in Orleans territory is a good illustration of his turning away from theory when a definite political situation seemed to demand it.

There were at least two reasons why Jefferson desired the planting of such a colony. In the first place, the western boundary of the acquired territory was in dispute and trouble with the Spaniards was imminent. In the second place, internal discontent in the territory over the form of government had its influence in determining Jefferson's attitude. Although the government under the act of March 2, 1805, was a great improvement over that under the Breckinridge bill of 1804, nevertheless the inhabitants of Orleans territory were not satisfied. The causes of this discontent are enumerated in Jefferson's correspondence.

Jefferson was not satisfied with conditions as they existed in the new territory. On April 2, 1806, he expressed himself to Senator Plumer of New Hampshire on a bill which provided that two million acres of land in the territory of Orleans be surveyed and divided into townships and lots, each alternate lot of one hundred and sixty acres to be given to a free able-bodied male not an inhabitant of the territory or of the Mississippi territory on condition that he would live there and cultivate the same ——— years and render ——— years of military service in the militia of the United States. Jefferson told Plumer that the bill was, in his estimation, the most important one then pending in congress. Louisiana was exposed to attack and it was necessary that provision should be made for

its defense. Nearly half of its inhabitants were such that they could not be depended on in case of an invasion. It would be impolitic and expensive to raise a standing army; and it was doubtful if the militia from the states would consent to go and stay there any considerable length of time. There was no means of compelling them to do it. If lands were given as bounties, able-bodied men would settle there and have an interest in defending the territory.

Plumer answered that he considered the bill as establishing a new principle in our government, a sort of feudal system, based on military tenure. He required more time to satisfy himself as to how far it would affect the constitution and the legal system. He feared the danger of sudden innovations in government.[1]

The bill to which Jefferson referred had been introduced in the senate, in the form of a resolution, on March 6, 1805, by Senator Worthington of Ohio. The text of the resolution gives certain details, especially as to the location of the proposed settlement, not contained in Plumer's report. It reads as follows:

Resolved, That, in order better to provide for the defence of the Territory of Orleans, a tract of land, not exceeding in any case ——— acres, to be located out of a tract of land not exceeding two millions of acres, to be surveyed between the Achafalaya, the Red river, and a meridian line passing by the fort at Natchitoches, shall be given, free of all expenses, other than those of survey expenses and office fees, to every citizen of the United States above twenty-one years of age, and not at present residing either in said Territory or in the Mississippi Territory, who shall, before the ———day of———next, become an actual settler on such tract, and shall actually improve, and continue to cultivate and reside on the same———years thereafter; on condition, that such actual settler, and his sons, above the age of eighteen years, at any time or times, during the said period of ——— years, be liable to be called into service for the defence of the said Territories of Orleans and Mississippi, and under obligation, during the same period, to continue in such service for any length of time which may be necessary.[2]

[1] "Plumer's register," 1, April 3, 1806, in the Library of congress. This is the third volume of Plumer's manuscript journal, "Memorandum of the proceedings in Congress." For further information concerning the record of events left by Plumer, see Everett S. Brown, *The constitutional history of the Louisiana purchase* (Berkeley, 1920), VI-VII.

[2] *Annals of congress*, 9 congress, 1 session, 164.

On March 12 the senate took the motion into consideration and ordered it referred to Senators Worthington of Ohio, Anderson of Tennessee, Adair of Kentucky, Bradley of Vermont, and Smith of Maryland.[3] The committee, through its chairman, Worthington, on March 21 reported a bill in conformity with Worthington's proposals. It was ordered to its second reading.[4] The bill narrowly escaped defeat when, on March 27, the senate divided equally on the question, Shall the bill pass to the third reading? The question was decided in the affirmative by the vote of the president of the senate, George Clinton.[5] On April 4, only two days after Jefferson's conversation with Plumer, further consideration of the bill was postponed until the next session of congress.[6] This seemingly put an end to the bill for, although on February 6, 1806, Worthington gave notice that he would on the following day "bring in a bill to encourage a settlement in the western district of Orleans,"[7] presumably his former measure, no further mention of it was found.

Jefferson, however, was not yet ready to give up his plan, as is shown by a letter, dated January 13, 1807, which he wrote to John Dickinson. He said that discontent in the territory of Orleans was due to the prohibition of the importation of foreign slaves, to the administration of justice in forms foreign to the people and all the more abhorrent because of the corruption of lawyers, and to the question of land titles.[8] Because of trouble with the French element, Jefferson proposed the enlistment of thirty thousand native-born Americans, to be transported at public expense and settled on bounties of one hundred acres of land each, west of the Mississippi, on condition of two years' military service should that country be attacked within a period of seven years. Besides providing for the defense of the country on the spot, the addition to the population would entitle the territory to become a state, with a majority of Americans, thus making it an American rather than a French state.

[3] *Annals of congress*, 9 congress, 1 session, 182.

[4] *Ibid.*, 191.

[5] *Ibid.*, 206-207.

[6] *Ibid.*, 228.

[7] *Ibid.*, 9 congress, 2 session, 62.

[8] These are the chief causes of discontent enumerated in a letter of Governor Claiborne to Madison, May 16, 1806, in *Official letter books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816*, edited by Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, Mississippi, 1917), 3:299.

"This," concluded Jefferson, "would not sweeten the pill to the French but in making that acquisition we had some view to our own good as well as theirs, and I believe the greatest good of both will be promoted by whatever will amalgamate us together."[9]

The settlement and control of western Orleans territory was not accomplished in the manner planned by Jefferson. It is not necessary here to discuss the general land policy of the United States government, or the neutral-territory plan of the settlement of the dispute with Spain over the western boundary.[10] Jefferson's desire to protect the frontier and to insure the Americanization of the new territory is an interesting side light on the history of the territorial policy of the United States.

EVERETT S. BROWN

[9] Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (Monticello edition — Washington, 1904), 11:135-137.

[10] Thomas M. Marshall, *A history of the western boundary of the Louisiana purchase, 1819-1841* (Berkeley, 1914).